

Issue Five October 2015

aargh!

Aotearoa Anarchist Review

CRISIS!

Crisis today, crisis tomorrow...

EDITORIAL

WELCOME to the fifth issue of *aargh!* (the Aotearoa Anarchist Review of Global Hegemony).

This time our theme is crisis, a product that neoliberal capitalism is remarkably effective at manufacturing and, in many cases, making money from. The first article describes market-driven bureaucracy's ineptitude at dealing with a climate change disaster, the May 2015 floods, as experienced by one local anarchist. Next we look at the prison-industrial complex where the vampire squid of global capitalism is attempting to make a killing (sometimes literally). The recent economic crisis in Greece, which seems set up to enrich foreign banks and investors, is briefly considered, followed by a critique of the Syrian refugee crisis and what this country's cynical, laissez-faire, laissez-mourir, 'what's-in-it-for-the-economy?' political leaders aren't doing about it.

Our book review section includes a review of Jane Kelsey's *The FIRE Economy*, a weapon in the class war waged by rich against poor for over thirty years in Aotearoa. We have brief articles on the August 2015 Basin Reserve flyover decision in the high court, the right-wing-driven purge of some left-leaning TV journalists and producers, and a doco project about women in low-wage jobs. For the large majority of us who have to eat on a constrained budget, the Scottish anarchist Hamish McThrifty presents an old Highland recipe, and its Lowland

version, that won't break the household bank. We finish off with a pertinent cartoon by our favourite local radical cartoonist.

Anarchism has been popularly misrepresented as an amoral, individualistic movement for social and political chaos. Chaos and amoral individualism, in fact, are products of a combination of parliamentary 'democracy' where people have a say in a flag referendum but no say about a wide-reaching trade agreement, and neoliberal global corporate capitalism which doesn't really listen to people at all, unless they boycott its goods and services or withdraw their labour, usually to their own cost.

Anarchism is not a rejection of organisation, but a way of organising human society so that everyone participates equally in decision-making about things that affect them. It rejects the state and authoritarian, secretive government, along with social coercion and domination in all its manifestations. In an anarchist society, everyone has equal freedom from restraint (limited only by respect for the rights of others, a major caveat) and as equal as possible access to resources, allowing equal opportunity to act and to enjoy life.

We welcome submissions to *aargh!* which can be sent to our email or postal address below.

Cheers

The Freedom Shop Collective

**aargh! is an anarchist periodical produced in
Wellington, Aotearoa, by the Freedom Shop Collective.**

If you'd like another copy of this one, send us an envelope addressed to yourself with an appropriate stamp and we'll mail you one. Send us ten dollars and we'll send five copies for you to give to your friends and family, who are bound to be delighted. Also feel free to send us money for more copies of issue five or a ten dollar subscription for the next four issues. We don't know when the next issue will come out, but it's sure to happen sometime.

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A Rising Tide of Foaming Anarchy!

By Sam Buchanan

ONE morning last May, I was out in the rain, standing thigh-deep in a flooded creek, trying to clear debris off a wire fence. The debris was blocking the water flow, causing it to overflow the banks and flood the railway line, then flow into a field where it formed a small lake at the back of some houses. At that point it looked as if rising water might swamp the houses, but in the end they were OK, except that their septic tanks overflowed, meaning they couldn't use their toilets.

While I was in the creek, a railways crew came along to inspect the railway line. There was some confusion as we sorted out who I was.

"Hi, you're the leaseholder aren't you, Jason, isn't it?"

"Umm, no, I'm Sam, from the community board."

After a bit of clarifying that I wasn't the landowner or leaseholder, which seemed to be assumed since I was trying to sort out a problem (why would I be doing that if I didn't have a financial interest?), we had a good chat about what needed to be done to deal with the floodwaters, and they said they'd get a digger in to clear the channel. The land was part of the former local farm, which had been bought a couple of years before by the government roading agency, NZTA, to build a motorway. They hadn't cleared the drainage channel, and it was silted up and overgrown. They'd also built a couple of wire fences over it, which created a path to a gate by the railway line, rather than pay a bit more to keep the fenceline parallel to the channel and put a second gate in. The fences trapped debris and caused the creek to break its banks, but the water wasn't going anywhere near roads, so it wasn't NZTA's problem.

Locally, it wasn't a big flood as such things go. We had 140mm of rain overnight, and elsewhere in the region houses were flooded out and one guy drowned. Roads and the railways were closed by slips which was why I couldn't get to work, and had instead gone down to check what the local creek was doing. Further downstream the creek had flooded some playing fields and pathways, and at a second place, more water was flowing into the aforementioned field behind the row of houses.

The big problem with floodwaters is they are anarchists; they ignore property boundaries and just go wherever they want. They don't respect authority and nobody really seems to know who owns them, or whose problem they are. Water that collected on NZTA land was flowing across land belonging to KiwiRail (ignoring the 'Keep off the Tracks' notices), pooling on NZTA land, then draining off to private land.

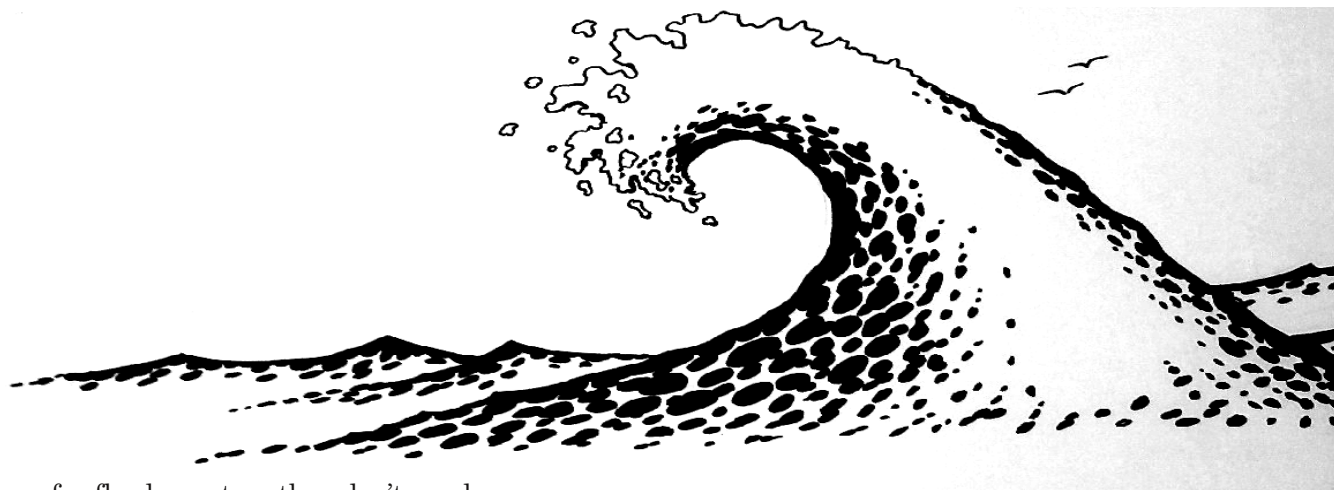
I headed back to the houses and met up with some of the residents, another community activist, our local councillor and some council staff. The council maintained that it wasn't really their problem, but I suggested they at least hire some portaloos in for the residents who couldn't use their toilets, and they did that fairly promptly.

A bit later on, the railways brought in a digger and cleared the channel – just enough of it to keep the water off the tracks, but not enough to stop the water flowing into the field beside the houses. After all, flooded houses aren't KiwiRail's problem.

The council was also bringing in a digger, to build up a stopbank that looked like it might breach. Of course, everything is contracted out nowadays, so the council doesn't have any diggers. They had to contact a contractor, bring him down to brief him, check how he was going to get the digger there – it had to cross NZTA land, and at least one of the gates was locked, so somebody needed to find out who had a key. Then he went back and got the digger and carried out the actual work. While this was going on there was a digger a few hundred metres away, which the railways had brought in, being loaded onto a truck and taken somewhere else.

By mid-afternoon things were calming down; there was more rain in the forecast, but the creeks were coming down and the houses seemed less under threat. Our small town has a pretty good community network mostly based around a couple of Facebook pages, and for every resident who looked like they might have to leave their homes for a bit there were several offers of places to stay.

Over the next few days the council did some drainage work – it's easier for them if they do the work within



ten days of a flood event as they don't need a resource consent. They brought in a pump truck and dewatered the flooded septic tanks, though they still maintained that it wasn't really their responsibility.

Not a big emergency, but a nice illustration of how things work. Or don't work. Three government organisations – the council, NZTA and the state-owned KiwiRail company were involved (the police turned up later but didn't really do anything, except tell residents they might have to leave their houses if the water got higher, which was already blindingly obvious), all taking care of their own patch and failing to liaise effectively with each other. A problem made worse by landowners with little real interest in maintaining the land. NZTA intends to sell this farmland in a few years when the motorway project is complete.

There's a lack of resources at local level and, while the community response was good so far as it goes, most people simply assume it's somebody else's job to sort the problem out. There's even a fear of interfering as it's happening on somebody else's property. The misunderstanding with the railways guys illustrates the general assumption that only a person with a vested interest would do something to try and sort problems out. It isn't expected that random people just head out to help.

One of the suggested strengths of the state is that it can harness resources and people to respond to emergencies. From what I've seen, in this example and elsewhere, it does a crap job.

Contrast this with how things would work in an anarchist society. Rather than dividing land among different owners, we'd socialise it as a community asset. We wouldn't have to worry about property boundaries or locked gates, just use commonsense to not muck other things up.

When work obviously needed doing, it could be done as soon as labour was available in the community. Residents wouldn't need to spend years writing to the council about potential flooding (as one of the locals had been doing), we'd sort out what work needed to be done in community assemblies. In an emergency, we could just get together with affected residents for a

chat and sort out what needed to be done right away.

Resources would be retained at a local level – we wouldn't have to get the council to agree to release funds, then have them hire a contractor to do the work. It seems reasonable to suppose that a community the size of ours (about 1700 people) would have a small digger available, and in this instance quite a bit of work could have usefully been done by getting a few people out with shovels. I would expect an anarchist society to cultivate an attitude of getting out to help, not waiting for somebody else to make decisions or saying 'not my problem'.

We'd also have re-routed the creek away from the houses before the flooding happened, back on to what was the original course before it was channeled to drain the fields for farming. This would form a wetland area which would both provide wildlife habitat as well as create a containment area for floodwaters.

Local people have proposed this, and everybody from council engineers to freshwater ecologists say it's a good idea, but the land belongs to NZTA, who lease it for grazing, and it's going to take years to work through the local council bureaucracy to get funds to purchase the land and carry out the work. The community will spend more time lobbying the council to get this done than it would take to do the actual work ourselves.

Even some state agencies are realising their emergency responses don't work – since the Christchurch earth-quake, civil defence has dropped its top down, military-model approach, which failed miserably, and replaced it with a community-led approach. At least, that's what it is supposed to be.

From what I've seen while working on a project to develop a local civil defence plan they haven't really figured out how to do this yet. The regional council – the agency responsible for civil defence – paid a guy who knew nothing about our community to come down and talk (and talk, and talk...) about what should be in our 'community-led' plan, but a friend told me one of the regional council's planning documents on 'community resilience' was described as "an anarchist manifesto". Sounds like a good start! @@@

The War on Crime

By Sojourn

IN NEW ZEALAND, and many other countries, the justice industry is often seen as a never-ending war against 'crime'. The battle is urgent and there is little questioning of it. Most people accept the crisis as normal. Prisons, police, judges and surveillance are all deemed necessary aspects of life to keep 'society' safe. From a young age people learn that police are there to protect them – but then there are a significant number of people who grow up knowing police are there to be scared of.

There are whole communities caught in the justice industry trap in this country. In many parts of Aotearoa it is as if everyone has been affected by prison: everyone knows someone who is or has been arrested or imprisoned. When I was a child, I was jealous of the boys because they got to go to borstal. The boys got to leave town whereas the girls didn't. I thought borstal was

boarding school, an escape route to freedom. It wasn't until I was older that I found out it was the youth prison.

And then I became an adult and moved to the city. I had my own short stint in prison as the result of protest activity; prison was a reflection of the town I grew up in – the majority of people were Maori and/or poor. Now though, I live and work in a predominantly middle-class Pakeha world where prison is a foreign concept to most and police and laws are there to keep the world safe.

I meet people who really do believe that only those who are 'bad' are ever arrested or imprisoned. It is from these people I hear the naïve sentiment: 'they must have done something, otherwise the police would never have arrested them'. And this is the sentiment that seems to dominate: they really do think we live in a violent society and the justice system is the only thing saving them.

Every day they read or hear stories about 'bad people'. They listen to the endless calls to get tough on 'crime', the calls for harsher sentences, police to have greater powers and more prisons to be built. People like Garth McVicar from the Sensible Sentencing Trust are given a huge amount of press coverage. When a tragedy happens, McVicar is there calling for revenge and retribution.

Every day we are saturated by stories of crime. If we want, we can sit all night entertained by 'crime'. Starting with the early evening news, we can watch someone sentenced to prison, we can watch a car chase or hear about a dangerous offender lose on the streets. After the news, we can watch *Road Cops*, *Gold Coast Cops*, *Police Ten7* and then end the evening with a crime drama – *Major Crime* is the current popular choice. Or we can surf horrific 'true-life crime' stories online. We can watch YouTube videos of police pulling over dangerous gun-carrying, drug-smoking, knife-wielding drivers or read heart-breaking stories about people who were raped or had their child murdered. We can jump between posts voicing anger about having a home burgled or a car stolen. We can share the terror of someone mugged as they walked through a park.

Screws

POETRY

You say, 'It's up to you.'
You mean, 'It's up to us.'
You say, 'Behave.'
You mean, 'Tow our line.'
You say, 'There are good reasons for this.'
You mean, 'Our reason.'
You say, 'Be honest.'
You mean, 'Nark.'
You say, 'Don't talk too much.'
You mean, 'Don't think for yourself.'
(and if you do, accept the consequences).
You say, 'You're intelligent, you know.'
You mean, 'You're dangerous, we're watching you.'
You say, 'We're right.'
I say, 'You're all fucked.'

– nā Donna

We can watch police beat people, police arrest people and police lead people away in chains to prison.

Or we can watch a whodunnit movie; so many end with the cop always getting the bad guy – dead or alive.

There is a seemingly insatiable lust for 'crime' as entertainment, a sickening delight in retribution and the misfortune of others. The result is that most people truly believe we live in a violent society filled with 'bad' people. The focus stays on the individual and day to day tragedies that occur as people live their lives. Murder and rape, muggings and assaults, car-thefts and burglaries, all occupy the central position of 'evil' and are the crimes to be controlled. No one looks beyond the spectacle of 'crime'. There is no analysis of what 'crime' is and little analysis of why they occur. There is also not much thought about who the 'criminals' are: why certain people end up arrested or imprisoned by the justice industry. The daily spectacle of 'crime' is a tool that binds people in fear and anger and blinds them to the crimes committed by the state.

We live in a society built on the bones of imperialism and colonisation. We are a capitalist society and capitalism needs an underclass to thrive. It needs unemployment and prisoners and a docile majority to survive. It needs people to unquestioningly accept that law and order is a necessity and capitalism is the only way of life. A society where everything and anything can be used to make a profit: be it the land taken by Wakefield and his mates and on-sold to settlers, be it the land wars of the 19th Century, be it the flooding of Lake Karapiro in the 20th Century or be it the people in prison now. We live in a society split by hierarchy and domination where the goal is profit for few and the cost is pain for many.

The real threats and tragedies that occur daily are not seen. The institutionalised racism, the exploitation, the increasing gap between the wealthy and the poor, the endless wars, and the pollution and destruction of the environment done for profit – all these are not interpreted as 'crimes'. They are largely ignored or become normalised and accepted as being a sad part of the modern world we live in. They are the outrages that are the blood and bones of capitalism.

The political lens is turned deliberately away from hegemonic violence and instead onto the 'street-level' tragedies – people follow the logic and give over more and more power to the institutions of police and security to ensure 'safety' in their streets and in their homes. The role of the state becomes ever more firmly entrenched.

The criminal justice system is accepted as the answer to the pains in society. The solution is punishment and the belief is that the tragedies and



violence can be fixed by strengthening the justice system. Even those people most screwed over by the justice system end up accepting the justice industry as an evil necessity. We weave our own nets of containment and ensure our own communities continue to be the ones locked up and detained at her majesty's pleasure.

It is beyond time to acknowledge that there is no justice in the justice industry. The justice industry must be stopped. I do not have the answers as to how we do that, but I do know that the panic about crime must stop. We need to turn the belief that violence is spiralling out of control and no one is safe in their own home on its head. It is capitalism that has spiraled out of control and no one is safe in their world anymore.

There needs to be critical analysis of the role and function of the criminal justice industry. In our own communities we can start by challenging those people who hold banners saying we are all part of the 99 percent. The police in particular are not on our side, they are tools to keep the wheels of the criminal justice turning. They maintain the status quo.

Occasionally there are times where we can occupy some space in the mainstream world. Recent examples include the Mt Eden SERCO 'fight club' saga and the hunger-strike to support an incarcerated transgender woman. These are chances for us to talk within wider communities and also chances to make contact once more with those most affected by the justice industry. It is a chance to also find common ground with reformers.

Reform does not work, as it only legitimises the current structures, strengthens the justice industry and eventually hides the real meaning of 'justice'. However, through engagement with reformers, we may increase awareness of abolition and help develop a wider understanding that there is no space for little fixes and tweaks of the 'justice'

system. It does not matter who does the locking up, locking people away will not heal society. We do not want reform or restoring – we want transforming of the wrongs.

Challenging the justice industry is a good fight for anarchists, it captures all that is wrong in society; the justice industry and prisons are a microcosm of the inequalities in society. In prison the racist and class nature of capitalism is laid bare. In prison we can see the most violent and oppressive forms of state control, there are no holds barred there. The fight and challenge to abolish prisons and transform justice means attacking capitalism and the role of the state.

Fighting the justice system is fighting for justice @@@

Prison Writings

Have you been imprisoned? Arrested? Harassed by the justice industry? Are you wanting to share your stories?

I'm interested in helping create an anthology by people who have been caught up in the justice industry. I envisage a book of first-person accounts, including creative non-fiction, poetry, critical reflections, essays, and comix. If you're interested, get in touch with me at FreedomShopAotearoa@gmail.com

Nāku noa, nā – Sojourn.

Material about prisons and justice available at the Freedom Shop include:

Abolition Now! CR-10 Publications Collective. AK Press (2008)

Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex, edited by Eric A. Stanley & Nat Smith. AK Press (2011)

Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women, Vicky Law. PM Press (2009)

SERCO and the Amy Adams Retirement Home

WHILE there has been a lot of coverage of the horrendous conditions at the SERCO-run Mt Eden remand prison, and even some critique of the concept of running prisons as a profit-oriented business, one aspect has been overlooked.

Parliament is currently considering a Bill that would mean that deaths in custody (e.g. prisons and mental health institutions) will no longer be automatically investigated. What could have been taken as merely a dubious idea before the practice of 'balcony dropping' became public knowledge must now be clearly seen to be an organised attempt to cover up the reality in prisons and other institutions.

But the government remains unfazed and just blames the inmates themselves for causing inconvenience to the bureaucrats by dying. Justice Minister Amy Adams displayed her usual cynicism when she explained the rationale behind the law change: "With an ageing prison population, the number of inquests into deaths in official custody or care may increase in the future."

In other words, because more and more old people are thrown into prison, deaths are to be expected and nothing unusual. Is prison becoming the new retirement home for the poor?

COMING FOR A SOCIAL SERVICE NEAR YOU

sercocide

Greece: Capitalism versus Democracy

By Sam Buchanan

THE ECONOMIC meltdown in Greece is the predictable result of trying to maintain a democratic government alongside an undemocratic economy. The trouble with social democracy is that, ultimately, economic power beats nice principles.

The Greek government has racked up debt, partially out of wasted spending, and partly to stave off discontent as capitalists take all the money and leave most Greeks poor. Now that the banks have dug themselves into a hole lending money that can't be paid back, but are demanding it anyway, the government can't, or won't, maintain its commitments to democratic processes – i.e. doing what people tell it to do – and instead is prioritising the desires of financial institutions over the needs of people.

While many commentators are blaming ordinary Greeks for the debt, much of it has arisen from spending on the military and maintaining luxuries for the elite.

Greeks work the longest hours in Europe, but incomes are relatively low. Under a military government until 1974, which did little to develop the country, Greece has a weak economy, dominated by tourism, agriculture and services. Historically, shipping was significant, now eroded as companies prefer to register their ships under flags of convenience and employ fewer and fewer Greeks, sourcing cheaper labour from even poorer countries. Increasingly, ship ownership is concentrated in a few large companies. It brings in money, but few jobs, whereas agriculture produces jobs but little money.

Despite claims to the contrary, Greek social welfare is anything but generous. European Commission figures show Greek unemployment benefits provided an income of only three percent of the median wage. Pensioners are better off, but Greek government spending on pensions per person over the age of 65 is lower than the EU average, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. From the perspective of an ordinary person, when it's clear that you will receive little economic reward from your work as profits are sucked up by capitalists, voting for a government that promises decent pensions is pretty much the only option you have for economic advancement.

Social democratic theory claims that a democratic government can meet the needs of its citizens, and be answerable to them, while allowing a capitalist economy in private hands. In other words, democratic control can be asserted over everything except the most important thing, production of goods and services (aka the economy), which is run by corporates and individuals answerable to nobody but themselves. Trouble is, when the economy is being run to meet private greed, people get poorer. If the government tries to tax or regulate corporates, they respond by disinvestment and international pressure. Corporates based in other countries are even less controllable.

When neither the government, nor the people, have an economic base sufficient to meet their needs, they have no option but to rack up debt. Even if a government was elected that was genuinely democratic and concerned with the needs of ordinary people, and not just the usual bunch of corrupt ratbags working hand in hand with corporate interests, buying guns and feathering their own nests – which is the normal situation – things wouldn't be any different. Social democracy is a nice theory, but history demonstrates that, as corporates have become increasingly powerful, governments that don't serve their interests don't survive.

Eventually, democracy comes up against the same old wall – those that control the money come calling saying: “You can do what you want, this is a democracy, but if you choose to do anything other than what suits us, we'll wreck your economy and you don't get to eat.”

Two things can then happen. Voters come to accept that voting in the interests of corporations is the best of a bad deal, as happens in most Western countries. Or, as has happened so far in Greece, the government beats them to it by giving in to pressure and changing its policies. While the Greek people voted to reject the planned austerity, the Greek government eventually backed down in the face of pressure from their creditors.

The lessons are simple – when leftist social democrats are getting all swoony over a government standing up for the well-being of ordinary people, stay calm, it probably won't last, and, if you want democracy, don't leave your economy in private hands @@@

Mother of the outcasts

By Peppertree

WELINGTON student magazine *Salient* named her 'person of the week' and reportedly people in Syria download her photo as the background image for their phones. In August German chancellor Angela Merkel became something like the saviour of the poor and down-trodden, a beacon of humanity.

She achieved that not so much by doing anything actively but rather by not doing what Hungary and Macedonia were doing (building razor wire fences) and what the Dublin Accord provided for (deporting asylum seekers back to the country of their first entry to the EU, i.e. Greece). It seems that these days not acting like a complete arsehole is sufficient to become a hero.

Then, on September 13, everything changed. The German government closed the border to Austria, where more than a hundred thousand had entered Germany in the previous weeks. Within 24 hours, Austria closed its border with Hungary, Hungary closed its border with Serbia, and Slovakia closed its borders with Austria and Hungary. Poland, the Netherlands and Belgium announced that they might follow suit. Then it was Germany's turn again to close its border with the Czech Republic. The only country that didn't shut down was Britain because it had never abolished border controls in the first place.

So what had happened that prompted this sudden change? Or was it really a change? On the surface, the reason was that the local authorities in Munich, where the trains from Austria ended, were seriously stretched to find accommodation for thousands of new arrivals every day. The distribution of refugees to other areas didn't work as well as anticipated. Pressure from the right wing Bavarian faction of Merkel's own party would have also played a part.

But wasn't the whole thing entirely foreseeable?

For months, there were reports from Greece that thousands were arriving every day on the islands of Lesbos and Kos. It was clear from the beginning that these people did not intend to stay in Greece, but instead would try and get to central and northern Europe, and that the Greek government (remember the Greek debt crisis?) would be unable and unwilling to stop them. So it was only a matter of time until a large number of people would arrive in Germany.

Yet German authorities were woefully unprepared. If it hadn't been for the help of thousands of volunteers and activists, the situation would have been a lot worse than it was on September 13. And who knows what the government's response would have been then.



The border at Röske.

Even before the announcement of border closings, Merkel and her French counterpart Hollande met to talk about the future. On the agenda were: a binding distribution arrangement for refugees among EU countries (which has so far been blocked mainly by Poland, the Baltic states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia), detention camps in Italy and Greece, as well as Phase Two of the EU plan to use military force to destroy refugee boats in Libya before they set off. In other words: continuing to build 'Fortress Europe' as before.

It is obvious that trying to control refugee movements by shutting inner-European borders is a bit desperate. Media commentators in Europe keep stressing how divisive these measures are and how they might even spell the end of the EU. So something must be done that unites the EU instead of splitting it, and the new and old plan is to stop refugees getting anywhere near Europe. The border agency FRONTEX was set up for that purpose, but now there are plans to get the military involved.

Back in May this year, the EU's foreign affairs and security policy chief Federica Mogherini announced a staged plan to take military action against people smugglers. Modelled on the anti-piracy mission ATALANTA, which has been operating off the coast of Somalia since 2008, this combined navy force will be destroying boats that the EU thinks will be used by refugees. Because the boats obviously have to be sunk

before the refugees board them, this would have to take place within Libyan waters or even on land. This requires a UN mandate and the agreement of the Libyan government, neither of which exists at the moment. Therefore the first phase of the project was limited to intelligence gathering.

Now it seems that it's time for phase two of the project, the actual blowing up of boats. Who is going to insist on agreements and mandates vis-a-vis the humanitarian crisis we are witnessing?

The worst thing is that all this happens in the name of 'saving lives', when the most obvious way of saving refugee lives – providing safe, legal routes instead of forcing people to rely on traffickers – isn't even mentioned.

So it seems that Merkel's miraculous transformation from the cold-blooded power broker who had no qualms letting a whole country go broke to the "compassionate mother of the refugees" (*The Guardian*) may have only been a tactical manoeuvre. The image change was necessary for Merkel and the German government to recover from the bully impression they gave during the Greek crisis and was useful for shaming some other EU countries about their refusal to act in a humanitarian way. Now that this has been achieved, everything can go back to normal. Just in time for the next act of the Greek drama, with a newly elected government there @@@

Game over for the flyover?

ON THE 21st of August 2015, the Wellington High Court confirmed the decision of the Board of Inquiry not to allow a 'flyover' highway to be built next to the Basin Reserve.

There was of course the expected outcry of the car lobby – the *Dominion Post* newspaper used the words "killed off", "dead and buried", "fatal blow" and "dead in the water" all in the first three sentences of their report on the decision. The paper isn't normally that negative about the 'justice system'.

The whole story of the proposal was very reminiscent of the 'bypass' project that was completed in 2007 and which destroyed the Te Aro community (forcing the Freedom Shop to relocate). The flyover is part of the same plan to build a continuous highway from the Kapiti Coast to the Wellington Airport. Governments, as well as the name of the agency in charge, have changed, but the plan has remained the same, although it is still unclear why there is such an obsession with having a highway that finishes in a necessary dead end at the airport (instead of it stopping at the ferry terminal and then resuming in Picton, like it used to).

Like with the 'bypass' (that doesn't really bypass anything), the 'flyover' project was sold to the car-driving public on the promise of significant time savings, which in both cases turned out to be mere seconds after closer examination. With both projects, the tactic was a piecemeal approach to building a few hundred metres of road at a time, which would only shift the traffic bottleneck slightly and lead to the inevitable demand to build the next few hundred metres. The government's approach to transport solutions is still one of roads and more roads for motorists, while other modes of transport are marginalised.

What has changed is the community response. While in the early 2000s, anti-bypass activists engaged in demos and direct action, like occupations and lock-ons, in addition to taking legal action, the Save the Basin coalition's strategy was simply to pay lawyers to represent it at the Board of Inquiry and the High Court. It's a sad indictment on a supposedly democratic government that it will pay no attention to community concerns until a court case forces it to @@@

Cutting Out the Missing Heroes

BOOK REVIEW

Revolutionary Women: A Book of Stencils by the Queen of the Neighbourhood Collective

PM Press 2010

Reviewed by Kathleen



“A RADICAL feminist history and street art resource for inspired readers.”

When we look at the ‘heroes’ of radical and revolutionary history, we see a bunch of dudes. Che Guevara, Mao, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela – the poster boys of any first-year’s revolutionary dorm aesthetic. This book was prompted by the question: “Where are the women?” – and the follow up: “Where are the glamorous, Che-esque stencils of their high-contrast faces?” Well here they are.

This project was originally a zine (made in New Zealand at Cherry Bomb Comics in Auckland, 2005). It’s now a book but one produced with heavy awareness of what it means to be a zine project – with focus on anti-copyright, swappability, ease of reproduction and propagation. Though creating a book limits some of these functions, the Queen of the Neighbourhood Collective are transparent in their reasoning – making a book has allowed them to reach wider audiences and, more excitingly, to include a wider range of stencils and revolutionary histories. Readers are invited to cut and paint. This isn’t a coffee-table book; it’s a “street-level resource.”

Each stencil comes with a short history of the woman’s revolutionary life. The classics – Emma Goldman, Angela Davis and Harriet Tubman are there, alongside women from all parts of the world and all parts of history.

The concept is solid. The original zine was reproduced and utilised all over the place. These simple stencils and concise histories are clearly effective as tools for spreading our history and changing the way we consider (or dismiss) women’s participation in the revolutionary past.

The concept is simple and it’s interesting that the book’s 8-page introduction focuses almost entirely on formative questions behind the project. How is a revolutionary defined? Which women and nationalities have been favoured and why? What is the purpose of idolising heroic images, when “the most successful of women’s struggles come about from leaderless anarchist collectives”? These are legit and important questions and it’s great to see not only that the QN Collective has considered them – but that they’re inviting readers to consider them as well.

The Freedom Shop Collective has made a batch of patches and t-shirts using these stencils. Come grab some from our store at 162 Riddiford St, Newtown, Wellington. We also have copies of the book for \$16.00.

Electronic versions of many of the stencils are available here: www.kersplebedeb.com/revolutionarywomen/

Wellington Welcomes Warmongers

FOR THE past 18 years, the NZ Defence Industry Association has been holding its annual conference in Wellington. This year is no exception. 200 of the world’s largest weapons manufacturers will be coming together on November 17 and 18 at ‘Absolutely Positively’ Wellington’s TSB Arena to discuss how to make even more money out of killing people.

In the past, the conference was held at Te Papa, but it had to move to a private hotel for a few years when in 2006 it was effectively blockaded by anti-war protesters. For the last couple of years, it’s been back at a public place and Wellington’s ‘Mayor of Peace’ Celia Wade-Brown, who likes to post videos of herself waving goodbye to nuclear weapons, has no problem with hosting the manufacturers of precisely those weapons in a council-owned venue.

The motto of this year’s conference “Expanding our horizons and strengthening the ANZAC relationship” is keeping in line with the WWI centenary. Translated from corporate newspeak it means making more profit by tapping into the current wave of ANZAC nostalgia. John Key paved the way for this when earlier this year he suggested that the troops that were sent to Iraq should come under an ANZAC badge: more patriotism, enabling more wars. We might even get a new flag to go with it.

Peace Action Wellington are mobilising for a blockade of the conference on November 17 and 18 and they will host a public meeting on October 21 at St John’s, Dixon St.

Find out more at peacewellington.org

The Class War – How we Lost it

The Fire Economy by Jane Kelsey

Chatto & Windus, London 2014

Reviewed by Val

THE FIRE Economy is a compelling exposé of the class war that has been waged against ordinary people for more than 30 years. It is a tremendously important book for anarchists and indeed, anyone concerned about how Aotearoa got to where it is economically and politically – and how we might begin to make a radical reformulation of the economy and society.

The book starts with a thorough examination of the nature and origins of the FIRE economy. FIRE stands for Finance, Insurance and Real Estate. The central premise is that wealth is no longer generated primarily through productive enterprises (such as manufacturing) but rather by making money from money. Fuelled by vast amounts of cheap credit, investors can buy things with very, very little of their own money (that means that they can also walk away from investments without losing much). At the same time, the removal of barriers limiting the activities of banks encourages speculation and risk-taking. Meanwhile, new, complex financial instruments have been created that bear no relationship to actual tangible things. These instruments are then speculated upon, vast fortunes are made by a few, while millions often suffer from their inherent instability (this was at the heart of the Global Financial Crisis). Anyone who has followed the astronomical rise of Auckland housing prices has been witness to the FIRE in action.

Most people on the NZ left are aware of the origins of the FIRE economy: the 1984 Labour government with Roger Douglas as Minister of Finance. Dramatic changes in the economy were made almost overnight: controls on the New Zealand currency were removed allowing the dollar to float, becoming one of the most traded currencies in the world (meaning its value could fluctuate wildly often for reasons totally unrelated to anything happening in NZ), massive privatisation of state assets and widespread deregulation (meaning businesses were subject to far fewer rules about how they could behave).

Kelsey's book traces the origins of FIRE not just in New Zealand, but further afield to its US and UK origins. In Chapter 3, she describes the current state of the New Zealand economy as one dangerously fragile and resting precariously on fundamentally unstable

foundations. She charts the decline of manufacturing and links it specifically to the rise in "shareholder capitalism" wherein the interests of the shareholders to maximum profit are paramount above even the health of the company itself. She argues that the ruling class is essentially in denial. They take undue credit for New Zealand's relatively unscathed position after the Global Financial Crisis (which had almost nothing to do with anything that happened here). Meanwhile, they refuse to acknowledge that the economy will face severe crisis again, and next time other factors (such as international dairy prices) will not cushion the blow. The ratio of private debt to GDP is unstable – and again, Kelsey identifies the dependence on housing investment as destabilising, noting that the GFC was largely caused by speculation in housing debt.

Turning to the effects of the FIRE economy, in Chapter 4, Kelsey looks at the social outcomes of this economic paradigm. Here, we are in familiar territory: inequality, exponential rises in household debt, outrageous rents and house prices, falling wages, student debt, loan sharks and poor rates of savings are starkly present in the lives of people up and down the country. Kelsey informs these issues and debates by explaining not only the background of all of these issues, but how ordinary people cannot escape the inherent instability that frames the whole economic paradigm that largely controls our lives.

The second part of the book – "Embedded Neoliberalism" is an extended exposition of the larger construct in which the FIRE economy has developed. Essentially, it means that despite debilitating economic crises, the underlying ideas about neoliberalism are never challenged. Most stunning is the way in which neoliberalism has been engineered to survive through successive changes of government, irrespective of their political colours. The details of this are critical to understanding what might be necessary to "unembed" it. As an example, Kelsey makes the strong argument that the 1999-2008 Labour government entrenched, rather than rolled back, neoliberalism, despite superficial adjustments understood at the time as victories for the left.

Additional chapters in the second part lay out the wider framework into which successive New Zealand

governments have embedded not just the economy, but our political and social worlds. In revealing the “Pillars of the Orthodoxy,” we learn the intertwined threads that hold the neoliberal agenda in place: the Reserve Bank Act 1989, the Fiscal Responsibility Act 1994, and the Public Finance Act 1989. With a deep disdain of democracy, the engineers of the neoliberal revolution here have tried to sell us neoliberalism cloaked in an aura of crypto-neutrality and “constitutionalism,” suggesting that monetary policy should be essentially above politics.

The final chapter of this book is the most important – and if you read nothing else – then read this. Entitled “Transformation,” it urges us to consider some of the lessons from horrific crashes in Ireland and Iceland. Most importantly, it offers us six prerequisites for a paradigm change. First and foremost of these is a “new international economic model that replaces

financialisation with one that gives primacy to the social role of economies and exchanges.” In essence, the economy should work for real people, not the other way around. Kelsey baldly states that we should not regard the state as a benign or benevolent player in this; that we should know it is a “partisan of capital.”

At the end of it, Jane Kelsey wants us to fight. We can and do have choices, she says, and we can and should fight to make a different world. There has been a global ideological revolution since the 1980s. Here it was a bloodless coup d’etat, but not without thousands of victims. If we want to create a different world, then along with a paradigm shift about neoliberalism, we need to consider a paradigm shift about how we conceptualise a revolution. We need to prepare for a long, hard slog, while we hold in our hearts the makings of a new, better, more beautiful world in this rotten shell of the old @@@

Radio killed the TV star?

IN THE last two years, there has been something of an exodus of TV journalists and producers who have shifted to Radio. First was Guyon Espiner (3rd Degree, TV3), followed by Carol Hirschfeld (Production Manager, Maori TV) and Mihingarangi Forbes (Native Affairs, Maori TV), and recently John Campbell (Campbell Live, TV3). All of them found a new home (and income) at Radio NZ.

It would be a bit of a stretch to say that a job at a radio station was more attractive to them than a job in television (especially for John Campbell, whose programme was axed), but the changes do have to do with the race to the bottom of journalistic quality that is the result of the relentless ratings war. This has been quite obvious with TVNZ and TV3, but a similar development seems to be happening at Maori TV. The Herald reports that “The public broadcaster aims to increase its commercial revenue by opening itself to advertising of ‘treat food’, soft drinks and gambling” (26/06/15). It is no surprise then that executive producer Annabelle Lee also left the station in June.

But does this mean that there is a resurgence of the good old steam radio? Maybe not. RNZ’s listenership dropped by 13 percent in 2014 and has stagnated since. There has been no funding increase for RNZ since 2008 and its charter automatically comes up for review every five years. If this trend continues, RNZ may also eventually go the way of commercialisation.

When that happens, maybe in 2020, where will all the radio journalists go? Will they be coming knocking on the doors of the only independent print media left – *aargh?*

Low-paid women doco

MINIMUM is an inquiry into the lives of women who work jobs that are under-paid and under-valued.

I have spent years in the service industry working hospitality and retail roles with low pay, bad hours and little respect from customers. I have heard women of all ages and backgrounds tell stories of harassment and disrespect in the workplace. This behaviour is unacknowledged, unchallenged and completely normal for many of us. The experiences of women in these environments have always stood out as sharing key similarities, and they have become especially topical in the wake of John Key’s ponytail pulling – a seemingly minor event which has pushed many service-industry workers to speak publicly about the way they are treated.

I am putting out a call for women who have worked, or are working, a minimum wage, service oriented or clearly undervalued role. This is a call for you to share your story. Your story can revolve around your day-to-day treatment at work, on one-off events or on ongoing behaviours and attitudes. There is no minimum or maximum length.

You can choose to submit your story anonymously through an online form, or take part in an on-camera interview.

No personal information will be shared without your express permission.

To find out more about the project, go to:

MinimumFilm.tumblr.com

or e-mail minimumfilm@gmail.com

Rumbledethumps and Colcannon

LIVING outside of capitalism was perfectly feasible for inhabitants of the Scottish Highlands and Islands in the pre-modern era. Without needing to participate in the cash economy, they built their houses and made their clothes from local materials, dug up peat for fuel and lived off the land using local vegetables, eggs, poultry, dairy products, beef, sheep, fish, game and illicit whisky, usually remote from the prying eyes of officialdom. Thanks to this diet and rigorous natural selection (another aspect of life that has been messed up by industrial capitalism), they attained a physical stature and standard of health unmatched in Europe in the nineteenth century. But those Highlanders who moved to cities such as Glasgow became stunted and diseased, or at least their urban slum-dwelling descendants did.

Unfortunately, the range of vegetables that can be grown in the northern Scottish climate is limited, the staples being potatoes (tatties), turnips (neeps), carrots and kale or cabbage.

The Highlanders' Colcannon derives from Kailcannon, a recipe thought to have been brought from Ireland with the potato in the eighteenth century. Rumbledethumps is a Borders version, with the same main ingredients of cabbage and potato. The name derives from the noise made on the kitchen table as the potatoes and cabbage are rumbled and thumped in the preparation. Anglocentrics have referred to both recipes as the Scots version of 'bubble and squeak' (a curried version of which was published in the second issue of *aargh!*).

Rumbledethumps ingredients

500g Boiled potatoes
500g Shredded boiled cabbage
40g Butter (vegan: 50 ml oil)
4 Spring onions or a small onion, chopped
Chopped chives
Salt and pepper
Grated cheddar (optional)

Colcannon ingredients

500g Boiled potatoes, cooked and creamed
500g Cabbage
250g Carrots, peeled
250g Turnips, peeled
40g Butter (vegan: 50 ml oil)
1 tablespoon brown sauce
Salt and pepper

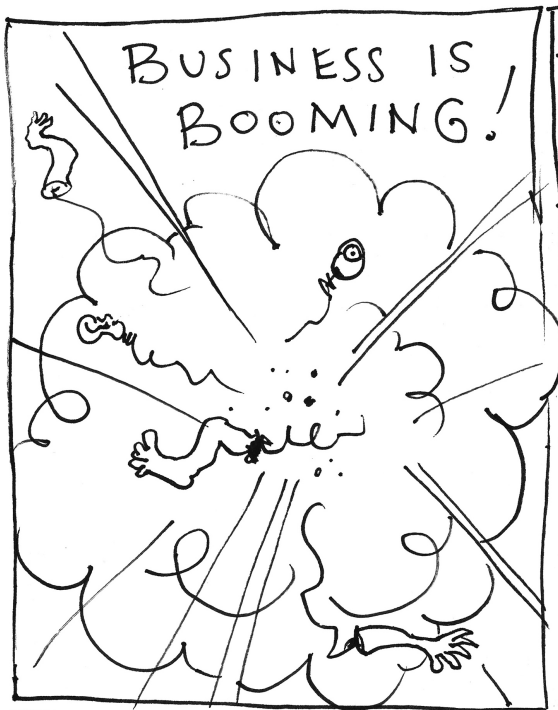
Cooking Directions: Rumbledethumps

1. Take equal measurements of boiled tatties and cabbage and mash/mince and mix together, adding finely chopped up spring onions and a wee bit of butter. Add salt and pepper. Top with chives.
2. Brown in the oven if required. Sprinkle with grated cheddar cheese for a tasty topping.

Cooking Directions: Colcannon

1. Wash and shred the cabbage, removing all the thick stems, and cook in boiling salted water for about 15 minutes or until tender. Chop and cook the carrots and turnips together until tender, then mash them until smooth.
2. Melt the butter in a pan, add the creamed potatoes, cabbage, and carrot and turnip purée. Stir all these ingredients together until they are thoroughly heated, then mix in the brown sauce and check the dish for seasoning before serving.

Both dishes can be eaten on their own or with a meat course such as lamb. Savoy cabbage can be used instead of the usual sort. These dishes are very cheap, but a Rolls-Royce version of either recipe includes the addition of two or more tablespoons of cream to give a much creamier mashed potato mix. The potato, cabbage and spring onion/carrots and neeps mixture is put into an ovenproof dish, topped with grated mature cheddar cheese and placed in a pre-heated oven at 190°C for 25 minutes until brown @@@



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(BY THE WAY)

Continued on back page...

TRACKING, POSITIONING, SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS, SECURITY AND SOFTWARE COMPANIES ARE ALL IN ON THE ACTION!

THIS IS VERY 'HIGH TECH'

SEE?

OH GOOD.

CAN WE HAVE ONE IN BLUE?

Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z Z

YOU MIGHT SAY IT'S WRONG TO PROFIT FROM CONFLICT...

THE CHECK

BATTLEFIELD SIMULATOR

SPY-WARE

FART!

TOP SECRET

HEY! YOU CAN'T SHOW THAT! IT'S COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE I.P.*!

*INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (-A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS.)

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NO, WE'RE WORRIED WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SELL IT TO THEM AS WELL!

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AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS!

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AND THE SUN IN THE SKY!

